DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 224 937 CE 034 694

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TITLE Vocational and Liberal Education. Maintaining the Balance in Higher Education.
PUB DATE 24 Apr 80
NOTE 13p.; Presented at Utah Education Seminar (Salt Lake City, UT, April, 1980).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Education; Career Education; Career Planning; Experiential Learning; *Higher Education; *Liberal Arts; *Relevance (Education); *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

Higher education must find an appropriate mix between liberal and vocational education to assure that every individual, upon leaving postsecondary institutions, will understand society and how it functions and will be able to earn a living. Dewey's thoughts on integrating the two are still relevant today for dispelling the false notion of dichotomy. The clientele of higher education has altered considerably to include children of blue collar workers who wish to acquire skills and specific information with the appropriate credentials to acquire a particular job. Instead of passing on the high culture, liberal arts should foster a closer alignment of its information, theories, and values with career preparation. Powerful advocates have in the last 15 to 20 years made the American public aware of the need for universal availability of vocational education that relates closely to the world of work through emphasis on application of theory and experiential learning. Dewey's idea that the question of how to interrelate technical and liberal studies was ultimately related to the question of what the quality of life would be in a technological civilization that has come into its own. The postindustrial society of the 1980's demands a balance of liberal and vocational education in higher education. (YLB)

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Utah Education Seminar - Univ. of Utah
April 24, 1980

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Vocational and Liberal Education
Maintaining the Balance in Higher Education

As I am sure you are all aware, higher education in America has changed dramatically in recent years. For example, between 1972 and 1978 there was a 22% increase in total enrollment nationally to 11.3 million. During this 6-year period there was a 38% increase in women students. No longer can we view undergraduates in the traditional manner. In most institutions a large percentage of students work and go to school at the same time. We no longer have a highly-motivated, well-financed, submissive studentbody willing to absorb four years of liberal arts. Today's student is much more career oriented.

Many of today's students want to have a measure of culture, but most of them feel it is more important to be able to be self-supporting and to earn a living. We must find an appropriate mix between liberal and vocational education, which will assure that every individual, upon leaving our post-secondary institutions, will understand our society and how if functions, but also will be able to earn a living. If students do not have the skills and know-how to make a living, they are obviously not liberally educated. By making it possible for all students in post-secondary education to be employable and to contribute to the nation's economy, we will be returning to the taxpayers a substantial margin of return on their investment.

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THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MANY PROGRAMS ON OUR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES-NOT OFTEN LABELED AS SUCH-ARE, IN FACT, VOCATIONAL IN NATURE. THE GRADUATES OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, THE SCHOOL OF LAW, THE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, AND THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ARE ALL PARTICIPATING IN A VOCATIONALLY OR CAREER-ORIENTED CURRICULUM. TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIELD OF ECONOMICS. ECONOMICS STUDIED FOR THE PURPOSE OF BECOMING AN ECONOMIST IS VOCATIONAL. ECONOMICS STUDIED FOR THE PURPOSE OF UNDERSTANDING AMERICA'S FREE-ENTERPRISE SYSTEM IS LIBERAL EDUCATION.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION? THIS QUESTION HAS BEEN WIDELY DEBATED SINCE 1906 WHEN THE ISSUE OF FEDERAL AID TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WAS FIRST RAISED BY THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PROMOTION OF INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION. THE DEBATE CONTINUED 8 YEARS LATER WHEN PRESIDENT WILSON'S COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AID TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WAS FORMED.

WRITING IN 1914 FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC, SOME 66 YEARS AGO, JOHN DEWEY REVEALED HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH THE RECENTLY APPOINTED COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AID TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

THE OBJECTIVES OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR JOHN DEWEY WERE, THEN: TO PROMOTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, TO TEACH THE REAL MEANING OF WORK, TO INCULCATE A SENSE OF CULTURE RELATED TO TODAY'S WORLD, TO DEVELOP A SPIRIT OF SOCIAL COOPERATION, AND TO HELP STUDENTS GROW IN INDUSTRIAL INTELLIGENCE. THIS WAS NOT THE AIM OF THE COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AID TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. IT WANTED TRAINING FOR SPECIFIC TRADES, DIVORCED FROM LIBERAL EDUCATION, LEADING DIRECTLY TO DEFINITE OCCUPATIONS. DEWEY WANTED <u>EDUCATION</u>; THE COMMISSION WANTED <u>TRAINING</u>.

DEWEY STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING TO LIVE IN THE

COMMUNITY. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOL CAN HAVE A SOCIALIZING EFFECT, HELPING STUDENTS TO GROW IN THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION WITH OTHERS. WE MUST AVOID THE OLD APPROACH OF GENERAL EDUCATION THAT OFTEN FOCUSED ON THE MERE ABSORPTION OF FACTS AND TRUTHS BY THE INDIVIDUAL. SINCE REAL DISCIPLINE COMES FROM TAKING PART IN CONSTRUCTIVE WORK, ALL STUDENTS SHOULD SHARE IN SOME OCCUPATIONS THAT EXACT PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

DEWEY WAS AN EDUCATIONAL REFORMER WHO BELIEVED THAT MANUAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES WERE ESSENTIAL FOR REVITALIZING THE TRADITIONAL GENERAL EDUCATION AND BRINGING IT INTO TOUCH WITH THE URGENT REALITIES OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE. EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT STUDENTS LEARN BEST WHEN THEY ARE ACTIVE; THEY LEARN BY DOING. THE CHALLENGE, HE SAID IS " TO UTILIZE THE SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A COURAGEOUS INTELLIGENCE, AND TO MAKE INTELLIGENCE PRACTICAL. THE AIM MUST BE EFFICIENCY OF INDUSTRIAL INTELLIGENCE RATHER THAN TECHNICAL TRADE EFFICIENCY."

DEWEY DEPLORED THE NARROW APPROACH OF TRADE TRAINING THAT PRODUCES WORKERS WITH "NO ENLARGEMENT OF MIND, NO INSIGHT INTO THE SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORK THEY DO, NO EDUCATION WHICH ASSISTS THEM IN FINDING THEIR WAY ON OR IN MAKING THEIR OWN ADJUSTMENTS."

DEWEY DEFINED CULTURE AS "THE CAPACITY FOR CONSTANTLY EXPANDING THE RANGE AND ACCURACY OF ONE'S PERCEPTION OF MEANINGS." HE REJECTED THE TRADITIONAL GREEK DISTINCTION BETWEEN "LIBERAL" EDUCATION FOR THE LEISURED CLASS (ASSOCIATED WITH ART AND LIBERATION OF THOUGHT) AND "PRACTICAL" EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES (USEFUL AND NECESSARY FOR LIVELIHOOD). HE ASSERTED THAT THE TWO APPROACHES MUST BE INTEGRATED INTO A USEFUL, PRACTICAL, ACTIVITY-BASED

EDUCATION INFUSED WITH INTELLECTUAL AND AESTHETIC CONTENT. HIS THOUGHTS OF ALMOST 70 YEARS AGO ARE STILL RELEVANT TODAY IN DISPELLING THE FALSE NOTION OF DICHOTOMY BETWEEN VOCATIONAL AND LIBERAL EDUCATION.

DURING THE PAST DECADE THE CLIENTELE OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION HAS ALTERED CONSIDERABLY. IN THE PAST THOSE DRAWN TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES REPRESENTED THE UPPER SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES. HIGHER EDUCATION WAS ORIGINALLY FRANKLY ELITIST. IT WAS A RIGIDLY HIERARCHICAL SOCIETY. COLLEGES EDUCATED A TINY ELITE DESTINED FOR THE MINISTRY OR THE PROFESSIONS OR FOR THE EASY RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLASS AND PRIVILEGE. THE EDUCATION PROVIDED WAS, IN ITS ESSENTIALS, A LIBERAL EDUCATION. ONE LEARNED SKILLS IN OTHER WAYS.

BUT AS AMERICA DEMOCRATIZED, THE MARK OF THE NEW MASS NOBILITY BECAME A COLLEGE EDUCATION. IN 1900, 200,000 STUDENTS WENT TO COLLEGE. LAST YEAR, THE FIGURE WAS 11.2 MILLION.

IN RECENT YEARS AN ENTIRELY NEW STRATUM OF AMERICAN SOCIETY HAS SOUGHT AND ATTAINED ACCESS TO HIGHER LEARNING. THE CHILDREN OF BLUE COLLAR WORKERS AND LABORERS-OFTEN THE FIRST IN THEIR FAMILIES TO ATTEND COLLEGE - NOW FLOOD CAMPUSES. THEY PERCEIVE HIGHER EDUCATION AS THE MEANS TO A HIGHER STATUS OCCUPATION AND INCREASED EARNINGS. IN THE PAST THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF PROFESSIONAL AND SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MEN SOUGHT ACCEPTANCE IN THE UPPER STRATA OF SOCIETY, WITH ITS DEMAND FOR AT LEAST A BRUSH WITH THE HIGH CULTURE. TODAY, THE CHILDREN FROM THE WORKING CLASSES DESIRE OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY.

THE NEWER JOBS IN SOCIETY REQUIRE A LOWER LEVEL OF ACADEMIC PREPARATION AND A GREATER DEMAND FOR SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGICAL AND

MANAGERIAL SKILLS OR PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING. THE "NEW" AS WELL AS THE TRADITIONAL STUDENTS REALIZE THIS ONLY TOO WELL. ACTUALLY THE "NEW" COLLEGIANS DO NOT HOLD CAREER PREPARATION IN ANY HIGHER PRIORITY THAN THE VAST MAJORITY OF THEIR PREDECESSORS FROM THE HIGHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA. THE ROUTE TO CAREER SECURITY HAS CHANGED, HOWEVER, AND THE BACHELORS DEGREE IN A TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINE NO LONGER ENSURES ENTRY TO DESIRABLE CAREERS.

THIS NEW WAVE OF STUDENTS, PRIMARILY FROM BLUE COLLAR FAMILIES, TENDS TO REJECT THE EFFICACY OF THE HIGH CULTURE IN ATTAINING A DESIRABLE STATUS IN SOCIETY. THESE "NEW" COLLEGIANS HAVE BACKGROUNDS THAT DID NOT IMPRESS THEM WITH THE NEED FOR ACQUAINTANCE WITH THOSE SUBJECTS CONSIDERED FOR SO LONG AS THE PROPERTY OF THE INTELLECTUALLY AND SOCIALLY ELITE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY. THEIR VIEWS EVIDENCE AN AMERICAN POPULIST STRAIN, AND THEY SURMISE THAT INCOME IS THE DOMINANT FACTOR IN SECURING WHAT THEY DEEM THE NECESSITIES AND PLEASURES OF LIFE. THEY WISH TO ACQUIRE SKILLS AND SPECIFIC INFORMATIO WITH THE APPROPRIATE CREDENTIALS, THAT WILL ASSIST THEM IN GAINING A SPECIFIC JOB AT THE END OF THEIR FORMAL EDUCATION. WHAT NEEDS THEY HAVE FOR THE HIGH CULTURE, THEY WILL PURSUE ON THEIR OWN THROUGH CONTINUING EDUCATION OR, AS IN THE CASE OF MOST AMERICANS, VIA TELEVISION AND OTHER FORMS OF MASS MEDIA.

A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO THE SITUATION RESIDES IN THE FORMAL PREPARATION OF FACULTY MEMBERS THEMSELVES. YOUNGER ACADEMICS, FOR THE MOST PART, DID NOT UNDERGO A LIBERAL EXPERIENCE IN THE TRUE SENSE OF THAT WORD, BUT PASSED THROUGH A LONG PERIOD OF SPECIALIZED PREPARATION WITHIN THEIR OWN SUBJECT AREA.

PRESERVING A TRADITIONAL VIEW OF THE LIBERAL ARTS WILL NOT SUFFICE TO ENSURE THEIR EMANCIPATING IMPACT ON FUTURE GENERATIONS. THE LIBERAL ARTS FACULTIES COULD BENEFIT GREATLY FROM AN ANALYSIS

AND A RETHINKING OF THEIR POSITION. PROFESSORS MIGHT ACCEPT MORE WILLINGLY THE GREAT CHALLENGE PRESENTED TO THEM IN ENSURING THE BENEFITS OF TRULY LIBERATING EXPERIENCES FOR ALL PERSONS ENROLLED IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

A LIBERAL EDUCATION MUST INCORPORATE MORE THAN A SERIES OF COURSES OR ENROLLMENT IN A SPECIFIC MAJOR. IT MUST REPRESENT A CONSTANT AWARENESS AND EXPLORATION OF ONE'S BEING AND PURPOSE - A PROCESS THAT BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING ONE'S BIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NATURE AND THE LIMITATIONS PROSCRIBED BY OUR HUMANITY. A LIBERAL EDUCATION OUGHT TO INVOLVE A PERSON IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT, IN EVER WIDENING CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHERS - AS INDIVIDUALS AND IN GROUPS. IT SHOULD FOSTER PREPARATION FOR A LIFE'S WORK THAT CREATES PERSONAL SATISFACTION, WORTH, AND PROGRESS, AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTING TO THE WELFARE AND HAPPINESS OF OTHERS. MOREOVER, IT RAISES AN AWARENESS OF FORCES BEYOND ONE'S SELF AND ONE'S RELATIONSHIP TO THEM.

IF THE GOAL OF LIBERAL EDUCATION IS TO CREATE QUESTIONING AND OPEN HUMAN BEINGS, REDUCING THEIR IGNORANCE AND PREJUDICES BY GIVING THEM MORE INFORMATION TO CONTROL THEMSELVES AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT; IF TO LIBERATE PEOPLE AND TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE HUMAN BEINGS AND BETTER CITIZENS IS IMPORTANT TO THE FACULTY MEMBERS IN THE LIBERAL ARTS, THEY SHOULD LEAP TO THE CHALLENGE PRESENTED OF A MORE SKILL ORIENTED VOCATIONALISM AMONG STUDENTS.

THE ELITIST FUNCTION OF THE LIBERAL ARTS IN PASSING ON THE HIGH CULTURE TO A NARROW BAND IN OUR SOCIETY SHOULD GIVE WAY TO TRANSMITTING THE BROAD SPECTRUM OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, STRESSING AN APPRECIATION OF OUR PLURALISTIC CULTURE AND AESTHETIC VALUES RATHER THAN INDOCTRINATION OF A SPECIFIC NORM TO JUDGE ALL HUMAN BEHAVIOR.

As a further objective, the liberal arts ought to foster a closer alignment of their information, theories, and values with preparation for a career; should integrate the liberating process with the more specific skills, abilities, and forms of a specific occupation and its accompanying life style. A view of man which does not include preparation for and dedication to a career seems strangely out of phase with a technological society which is implementing mass higher education as a practical goal for millions of its citizens.

In the last 20 years, vocational education stimulated by the appointment of a national panel of consultants by the late President Kennedy has enjoyed tremendous expansion and has achieved virtually universal acceptance as an equal partner in American education. Policy makers who have been the "movers and shakers" in American education have contributed to this acceptance of vocational education through the strong stands they have been willing to take. Let me share with you some brief quotations:

President Lyndon B. Johnson's National Advisory Council on Vocational Education in its First Report said:

"At the very heart of our problem is a national attitude that vocational education is designed for somebody else's children. This attitude is shared by business men, labor leaders, administrators, teachers, parents, students. We are all guilty. We have nurtured the idea that the only good education is a liberal education "capped" by 4 years of college. This idea, transmitted by our values, our aspirations and our silent support is snobbish, undemocratic and a revelation of why schools fail so many students.

"THE ATTITUDE MUST CHANGE. THE NUMBER OF JOBS WHICH THE UNSKILLED CAN FILL, IS DECLINING RAPIDLY. THE NUMBER REQUIRING A LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE EDUCATION, WHILE GROWING, IS INCREASING FAR LESS RAPIDLY THAN THE NUMBER DEMANDING A TECHNICAL SKILL. IN THE 1980'S IT WILL STILL BE TRUE THAT FEWER THAN 20% OF OUR JOB OPPORTUNITIES WILL REQUIRE A 4-YEAR COLLEGE DEGREE. IN AMERICA, EVERYONE MUST BE EDUCATED TO THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL AND THE HEIGHT OF THE POTENTIAL IS NOT MEASURED BY THE COLOR OF THE COLLAR. PLUMBERS, CARPENTERS AND ELECTRICIANS MAKE MORE THAN MANY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS AND COLLEGE PRESIDENTS. ONLY THE ARROGANT WILL ALLOW THEMSELVES TO FEEL THAT ONE IS MORE WORTHY THAN OTHERS. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY EXERCISE ITS LEADERSHIP AND ALLOCATE MORE OF ITS FUNDS TO CURE OUR COUNTY OF OUR NATIONAL SIN OF INTELLECTUAL SNOBBERY."

ABOUT THE SAME TIME DR. JOHN W. GARDNER, FORMER SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE IN HIS BOOK CAN WE BE EXCELLENT AND EQUAL TOO? SAID:

"THE SOCIETY WHICH SCORNS EXCELLENCE IN PLUMBING BECAUSE PLUMBING IS A HUMBLE ACTIVITY AND TOLERATES SHODDINESS IN PHILOSOPHY BECAUSE IT IS AN EXALTED ACTIVITY, WILL HAVE NEITHER GOOD PLUMBING NOR GOOD PHILOSOPHY. NEITHER ITS PIPES NOR ITS THEORIES WILL HOLD WATER."

TERRELL H. BELL, U.S. COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, STATED IN JANUARY, 1975, THAT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TODAY MUST CONCENTRATE ON OFFERING STUDENTS "SALABLE SKILLS." HE STATED, "THE COLLEGE THAT DEVOTES ITSELF TOTALLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY TO THE LIBERAL ARTS TODAY IS JUST KIDDING ITSELF" AND " TO SEND YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

INTO TODAY'S WORLD ARMED ONLY WITH ARISTOTLE, FREUD, AND HEMINGWAY IS LIKE SENDING A LAMB INTO THE LION'S DEN. IT IS TO DELUDE THEM AS WELL AS OURSELVES."

GOVERNOR CALVIN L. RAMPTON SAID TO THE EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES IN 1971:

"THE ACADEMIC IVORY TOWER MUST GIVE WAY TO A SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION WHICH RELATES MORE CLOSELY TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, AND WHICH IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING THE STUDENT WITH A BROAD EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND, EQUIPS HIM WITH SKILLS WHICH ARE READILY MARKETABLE IN THE ECONOMY OF THE NATION. I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT ALL OF OUR UNIVERSITIES BECOME MERELY GLORIFIED TECHNICAL COLLEGES, BUT I AM RECOMMENDING THAT THE CURRICULUM BE MADE MORE OBVIOUSLY RELEVANT TO THE COMMUNITY AND ITS PROBLEMS, AND TO THE ABILITY OF THE STUDENT UPON GRADUATION TO FIT MORE READILY INTO THE SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY OF THE COMMUNITY".

SUCH POWERFUL ADVOCATES HAVE IN THE LAST 15 - 20 YEARS MADE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AWARE OF THE NEED FOR UNIVERSAL AVAILABILITY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. SUCH SUPPORT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION HAS BEEN NEEDED AND HOPEFULLY WILL CONTINUE.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RELATES CLOSELY TO THE WORLD OF WORK THROUGH EMPHASIS ON APPLICATION OF THEORY AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING. IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED AS INDISPENSABLE. IT IS STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO PROVIDE AN ARRAY OF SHOPS, LABORATORIES, AND WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS IN WHICH STUDENTS MAY PRACTICE THEIR RESPECTIVE OCCUPATIONS. MEDICAL EDUCATION CULMINATES IN INTERNSHIP

AND RESIDENCY, AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN SUPERVISED PRACTICE. EVEN IN LAW SCHOOLS - PROBABLY THE MOST DIDACTIC OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS - STUDENTS STUDY CASES, PREPARE BRIEFS, AND PLEAD IN MOOT COURT.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IS, OF COURSE, AN EXPRESSION OF THE EMPIRICAL SPIRIT ASSOCIATED WITH THE RISE OF MODERN SCIENCE. IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT MANY OF THE MOST ARTICULATE EARLY ADVOCATES OF LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE WERE SCIENTIFIC THINKERS. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, FOR INSTANCE IN HIS PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH IN PENSILVANIA (1749), URGED THAT THE PRACTICE OF GARDENING AND PLANTING BE INCORPORATED INTO THE STUDY OF NATURAL HISTORY. FRIEDRICH FOREBEL (1890), THE EARLY PROGRESSIVE EDUCATOR WHO URGED GREATER USE OF ACTIVITY IN EDUCATION WAS ALSO A PASSIONATE STUDENT OF NATURAL SCIENCE WHOSE DOCTRINES WERE SHAPED IN PART BY THE EMERGING IDEA OF EVOLUTION.

ONLY IN THE LIBERAL ARTS HAS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING YET TO ESTABLISH ITSELF AS A FULLY RESPECTABLE ELEMENT OF THE CURRICULUM. THIS IS ONE REASON THAT SO MANY STUDENTS AVOID OR DELAY AS LONG AS POSSIBLE ENTRY INTO THE LIBERAL ARTS WHEN GIVEN A CHANCE.

MARVIN FELDMAN SAID RECENTLY:

"AMERICA'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS MIGHT WRITE EDUCATIONAL HISTORY BY HELPING TO REHABILITATE THE LIBERAL ARTS AND THE FINE ARTS IN THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

"WE'VE COME TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE PRACTICAL ARTS, THE LIBERAL ARTS, AND THE FINE ARTS AND THOUGHT OF THEM AS SEPARATE AND INCOMPARABLE. ALL OF THEM - NOT JUST THE LIBERAL ARTS - ARE LIBERATING BUT IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

"THE PRACTICAL ARTS LIBERATE PEOPLE FROM A HELPLESS DEPENDENCE -

AND THIS HAS GIVEN OUR VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MISSION A SPECIAL URGENCY.

"THE LIBERAL ARTS ARE THE ARTS OF MEANING. THEY GIVE STUDENTS A SENSE OF CONTEXT AND CONTINUITY. THEY LIBERATE THEM FROM A SENSE OF ISOLATION AND FUTILITY.

"THE FINE ARTS ARE THE ART OF TRANSCENDENCE. THEY TEACH THAT MAN CAN CREATE MORE THAN HE CAN COMPREHEND. THEY LIBERATE STUDENTS FROM WHAT IS ONLY LITERAL."

THE ANOMALY IS THAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS ARE THE BEST ABLE TO MAKE THE CASE FOR THE LIBERAL ARTS. WE DO NOT HAVE TO PRETEND THEY ARE VOCATIONALLY RELEVANT, BUT THAT THEY HAVE A DESPERATE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR OWN!

THIS LEADS TO THE PRACTICAL QUESTION: WHAT ELEVATES A VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO THE LEVEL OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION? THREE CHARACTERISTICS ARE ESSENTIAL:

1. COMMUNICATION SKILLS MUST BE A STRONGLY EMPHASIZED PART OF THE PROGRAM. STUDENTS MUST LEARN TO READ AND WRITE - NOT A SIMPLIFIED COURSE IN TOOL NOMENCLATURE, BUT A FULL-FLEDGED ENGLISH PROGRAM. COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE EMINENTLY VOCATIONAL; THEY ARE ESSENTIAL FOR HIGHER-LEVEL POSITIONS IN ANY FIELD. THEY ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO OTHER OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION: THE ABILITY TO BE A WELL-INFORMED CITIZEN TO BE INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, AND TO KNOW HOW TO ENJOY LEISURE TIME.

2. MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE ARE A SECOND CHARACTERISTIC OF ANY VOCATIONAL PROGRAM THAT IS TO MERIT THE NAME OF EDUCATION. A GLANCE AT THE CURRENT CATALOGUES OF TEXTBOOK PUBLISHERS SHOWS HOW MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN RELATING MATH AND SCIENCE TO

ALMOST EVERY TRADE AND PROFESSION. ABILITY IN MATH AND SCIENCE IS INDISPENSABLE FOR OCCUPATIONAL ADVANCEMENT AND FOR UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATING THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.

3. EXPERIENCE OF THE JOY AND SATISFACTION OF WORK IS THE THIRD CHARACTERISTIC OF ANY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS TO HELP THE STUDENT GROW AS A PERSON, DEVELOPING SELF-CONFIDENCE, STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE, CREATIVITY, A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION IN WORKING WITH OTHERS, AND LOVE FOR WORK.

JOHN DEWEY PUSHED THIS KIND OF IDEAL AGAINST THE POWERFUL CONTRARY TIDES OF THE INDUSTRIAL ERA. HE ARGUED THAT THE QUESTION OF HOW TO INTERRELATE TECHNICAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS WAS ULTIMATELY RELATED TO THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE QUALITY OF LIFE WOULD BE IN A TECHNOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION.

THAT IDEA HAS COME INTO ITS OWN IN EDUCATION NOT ONLY IN AMERICA BUT THOUGHOUT THE WORLD. AS HEAD OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION TO THE UNESCO WORLD CONFERENCE HELD IN TOKYO, I OBSERVED THAT VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE 82 DELEGATE NATIONS WERE STRUGGLING WITH THE SAME QUESTION.

THE CHALLENGE OF MAINTAINING AN APPROPRIATE BALANCE BETWEEN LIBERAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION MUST BE MET HEAD ON. NEITHER SHOULD FEEL THREATENED BY THE OTHER! THE POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY OF THE 1980'S DEMANDS THAT THE ARTIFICIAL DICHOTOMY BE ELIMINATED AND THAT OPPORTUNITIES BE PROMOTED FOR ALL STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO CHOOSE A BALANCE OF LIBERAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.